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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RIYADH 004627

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DHAHRAN SENDS
PARIS FOR ZEYA, LONDON FOR TSOU

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SA](#)

SUBJECT: COORDINATED MOVES: FOUR BROTHERS PLAY LOCAL EP
POLITICS

REF: A. 2005 RIYADH 9394

[1](#)B. 2005 RIYADH 8323

Classified by Consul General John Kincannon for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: At a lunch with Consulate staff on June 6, Yousef, Khalifa, Khalid, and Mohammed Al-Dossary, brothers with a variety of business interests and political activities (ref A), described several aspects of the Eastern Province (EP) political situation. Yousef said that EP Emir Prince Mohammed bin Fahd has "lost interest in his job" because "he knows he will be leaving soon" and complimented the management style of the vice Emir, Prince Bin Jiluwi. Khalifa expressed frustration with the Greater Dammam Municipal Council, with several of the brothers suggesting that government appointees, led by the Mayor of Dammam, were conspiring to maintain the status quo in the face of more activist elected members like Khalifa. Yousef, recently elected to the board of the EP Chamber of Commerce & Industry (EPCCI), said that his two biggest priorities as board member were relaxing Saudization (discussion reported septel) and improving infrastructure, particularly at the ports. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Discussing the state of affairs at the EP Emirate, Yousef said that Prince Mohammed bin Fahd (MbF) "has lost interest in the job: he knows he is leaving and only tends to his private business interests now." He described vice Emir Prince Bin Jiluwi as "clean, trained for his job, and serious - if you tell him something, he'll look into it." Yousef alleged that Bin Jiluwi had effectively removed several top staff members at the Emirate, including Saad Al-Othman, the deputy Emir (No. 3) for corruption and nepotism. (Note and comment: Rumors that King Abdullah would ask MbF to leave his job were at a fever pitch in the fall of 2005; they subsequently subsided, but have not disappeared. Bin Jiluwi has always seemed to us to be completely subservient to MbF (ref B); if Yousef's characterization is accurate, he may be playing a larger and more assertive role at the Emirate. End note and comment.)

[1](#)3. (C) Khalifa, Yousef, and Khalid all separately discussed the Greater Dammam Municipal Council, of which Khalifa is an elected member, and the council's relation with the Mayor of Dammam, Dhaifallah Al-Otaibi. Khalid said that Al-Otaibi and the other appointed council members had orchestrated the election of Khalid Al-Falih, a senior vice president at Saudi Aramco and one of the council's appointed members, as president of the council. Yousef expanded on this theme, arguing that Al-Falih's election allowed Al-Otaibi, a former Aramco himself, to effectively manage the council. Khalifa expressed his frustration with the council's governance

structure and its apparent lack of support for his major initiative, a complete renovation of the al-Khobar and Dammam coastline through some sort of public-private partnership.

14. (C) Yousef explained his strategy for a two-pronged Dossary attack on Al-Otaibi: "I'm making him come to the EPCCI to present his plan for Dammam's development. We're going to blast him, both at the meeting and later in the press. Khalifa will hit him from the municipal council side, and me from the business side." In addition to his attack on Al-Otaibi, Yousef said that during his tenure on the EPCCI he hoped to accomplish a relaxation in Saudization (reported septel) and an improvement in Dammam's infrastructure, particularly at the port. According to Yousef, there is just one X-ray scanner at the Dammam port, and only 60 percent of incoming containers are screened. "They need to buy several more scanners; we're worried that the one scanner will break down and nothing will move for three weeks until they get the parts."

15. (C) Comment: The Dossary brothers continue to impress us as younger and more dynamic counterparts to some of the EP's more established business families. They contested the area's only two significant elections, for the municipal council (where Khalifa was the highest vote-getter for the Greater Dammam Municipal Council) and for the EPCCI (where Yousef led a slate that wrested two out of 12 seats from the incumbent group). The brothers clearly see a close relationship between their political activities and their business interests: we suspect that Khalifa's desire to renovate Dammam's corniche is rooted as much in the potential for real estate deals (in which the family is a big local player) as in his constituents' desires. The brothers' description of municipal council dynamics do not surprise us:

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Al-Otaibi has privately indicated to us his contempt for the council's elected members, and the council's composition and by-laws would allow the mayor to effectively manage the council if he had the support of the appointed members and if the elected members were not unified. End comment.

(APPROVED: KINCANNON)
OBERWETTER